

CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



CONTACT:

Karen Terrill
Information Officer
(916) 653-5123

**RELEASE
DATE:**

May 22, 2001

CDF Declares Fire Season Statewide

Sacramento- Due to unseasonably hot, dry and windy conditions in much of the state, all units of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) will officially declare fire season open as of 8 a.m. today (May 22, 2001). This will affect the more than 30 million acres of state and private land protected by CDF.

In an unusual move, Glen Newman, CDF deputy director for fire protection, instructed all 21 units to begin staffing around the clock and to immediately hire their seasonal fire-fighters. "It's hot and especially dry for this time of year. The wind in the north has dried out the vegetation and in many places it is ready to burn," said Chief Newman. "I want all of our facilities to be on full fire season status immediately."

"Fire Season" is simply a state of readiness. Dispatch levels of emergency responders are typically increased. The declaration of fire season also means that all CDF facilities will be staffed 24 hours per day. The hiring and training of 1400 seasonal firefighters will be completed as soon as possible. Airtankers and helicopters will be moved from off-season maintenance sites to the air bases around the state, where they will be available for dispatch.

The declaration of fire season may also mean that burn permits are cancelled in some areas. Anyone wishing to burn on their property, or anyone wishing to start a campfire, should check with local authorities first.

Chief Newman adds: "We are getting ready for fire season and we are asking all Californians to do the same. Now is the time to create a defensible space around your home. Give our firefighters a fighting chance to save your property."

For tips on how to make a home firesafe, see the CDF website at www.fire.ca.gov

###